

S E R M O N,

PREACHED FEBRUARY 28, 1794.

BEING

THE DAY APPOINTED

FOR A

G E N E R A L F A S T.

BY

J. BRAND, CL. M. A.

L O N D O N:

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S H K M O N

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1851

THE EAST LINDING

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C E M E L T A T



J. B. AND C. M. A.

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S E R M O N, &c.

LUKE, Chap. xix. Ver. 41, 42.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

THERE are two prophecies of our Saviour, relating to the final fall of Jerusalem, recorded by St. Luke; and the words of the text are the introduction to the first of them: and it was at the awful moment, when going up to present himself a living sacrifice for the sins of mankind, he came in sight of the walls of that city, that he pronounced it. And since its terrible accomplishment, no period has called the attention of mankind so directly and solemnly as the present, to the consideration of that calamity, and of the fatal causes which led to it.

The people of the various kingdoms of the world, who own obedience to the law of Christ, have, for many ages, been free from the scourge of such utter destruction; its mild influence, though it has not broken the sword of battle, has blunted its edge; and if hostile anger has not been disarmed by it, it has made hostile revenge drop the point of his spear: thus the state of mankind, sheltered from the former severity of the storms which laid it waste, has in these countries been improved; and those who had accurately marked the progress of this amelioration, flattered themselves with a prospect of the stability of what was gained to the general happiness, and of great further acquisitions.

The melancholy experience of a brief, very brief period, has shewn us, on what a quicksand this splendid edifice of human expectation may be founded: that the acquisitions of ages improving upon ages may, perhaps, be suddenly crushed by one blow of the iron mace of desolation; wielded by a more ferocious arm than that of ancient barbarism, and lost in utter extinction. In a kingdom which has acknowledged the faith of the cross of Christ, the tyranny of impiety has shut his worshippers out of the temples dedicated to his holy name: violence has trampled upon every human institution, hitherto revered as august: the lawgiver whom they have set up over themselves, has been compelled by the

meanest of the people, and by threats of death, to publish their will as his law. Terror and the sword have expelled knowledge, rank, and probity, from the seat of judgement; and their place has been defiled by those who ought to have been the victims of her keenest indignation: possessions, derived from a long illustrious line of ancestry, or the reward of worthy services to the state, or acquired by the industry which at the same time has fed it; whatever a genuine, or a mistaken piety, whose errors virtue does not look upon without affection, had consecrated to the maintenance of the altars and ministers of our Saviour and our God, and the charitable relief of the poor of the land, to whom there the law gives no support; all these rapine has seized upon as her own. The multitude, made blindly furious, are now destroying with their own hands the means of their future subsistence; the part of the wealth of the trafficker, the merchant, and the landholder, which sets to work the industry of the needy; from whence alone the hire of the labourer and artificer can be paid; which cannot be a little diminished, without extreme distress to all those to whom it yielded the bread of life, and taking it absolutely away from many: even this storehouse and treasury of the poor has been broken open, and plundered of much of what it contained. The cries of violence and murder are in the whole land; their choice buildings, and their cities, they have laid waste with fire, and their names are spoken of no more: their towns are polluted with blood, and the inhabitants are wasted in the midst thereof; and death walks at large in their streets and highways—Their two sovereigns have perished by murder, tricked out by the cruel insolence of mockery in the robes of justice: their king, blessed in that mild quality of nature, that affection to his people, which loyalty and humanity must love; who, if he had possessed that austerity of firmness, whose awful terrors have been known to wither the arm of guilt raised to strike, would possibly have repelled the most torturing arrow which can pierce the soul, and despair, from his own innocent bosom. Their princes have been driven into indigence and exile; their nobles, and their honourable and wise men, are either wandering in strange lands, condemned to drain to the very dregs the bitterness of misery, which is mingled in their cup to drink; or eat the scanty bread of poverty, steeped in the tears of anguish that knows no hope; or fast bound in misery and iron, buried in dungeons, visited of no day sprung from on high, never to breathe this purer air, or see the light of the sun again, until the voice of the murderer shall be heard, calling each of them forth to take his sad turn in death. Others hunted for slaughter in the city, hunted for slaughter in the field; friend dreading in his friend a betrayer, and a murderer in him whom he knoweth not. The dying blood of many hath stained their own walls, now become the property of the robber, and calleth for vengeance in vain. Some have perished in the midst of those whom their bounty had sustained with food and raiment, and by their execrable hands. And many rendered furious to distraction by the terror that pursued them by day, and the fear of the arrow that flieth in darkness, have escaped from evils, almost too overwhelming for man to bear, by the sword of self-destruction. In the courts of the Lord's house, the ministers of his law have been slain heaps upon heaps; and the altars of the God of all mercies have been defiled with their blood. In the language of the scriptures, their priests are cut off by the sword, and there are no widows to make lamentation.

If it be asked, what has disnatured man into such savageness? it may be answered, that one leading cause is, the prevalence of the last wickedness of self-delusion—that furious delirium of the impiety of minds to all good works and thoughts reprobate—Atheism; her numerous professors, to free untutored guilt from every restraint, to pluck conscience, the vicegerent of the Divinity in our bosoms, from her throne, have compelled the voice of the law to proclaim to the unknowing multitude, that the sufferings of the sublimest virtue and piety will meet no retribution after this life; the darkest crimes which can outrage human nature, no punishment; that death is an eternal and undisturbed sleep alike to both; and that heaven and hell are visionary fables. “They have said aloud, there is no God: they have done abominable works; and eat up the people as they eat bread:”^a Destruction and unhappiness are in their ways.

The extremes of virtue and of vice have this in common; that their votaries labour, with unremitting assiduity, to make all men like themselves. Christianity had her apostles and teachers, who dispersed themselves into every country, to instruct mankind in the gospel of peace, as the means of universal happiness—salvation: the missionaries of this mystery of iniquity have penetrated into every kingdom of the Christian world, to make converts to a system pregnant with universal misery; nor have they laboured here absolutely without success, though with much less than in their folly they had flattered themselves to obtain. Our national name has not escaped being disgraced, by their finding some open and avowed patrons, others more subtle and indirect, and therefore more dangerous abettors of their atrocious delusions. We are met here to supplicate the throne of grace, to prevent the spreading of this poison among us; and preserve us from its dreadful consequences: and to intreat him who sitteth thereon for ever, that he would bless our exertions in this new and more than ordinary state of peril; and be himself the safe-guard and defence of his servants: who have been compelled, by the stern necessity of self-preservation, to fight the battles of religion, justice, and human kind: not visiting us according to our iniquities, and the abuse of his mercies toward us, which in the solemn devotions of this day we have confessed unto him; but that he will grant us the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may by the sincerity of our repentance, and by actual amendment of life, render ourselves worthy of the continuance and increase of the benefits he has vouchsafed unto us.

The occasion of the national act of humiliation of this day, differs from all those which have preceded it in our former wars, chiefly on the first of these accounts, the danger of spreading a system of crimes, and a system of criminal sophistry among us, and that under the fallacious name of new discoveries in political morality. It was against the same fanatical perversion of the principles of freedom, leading the way to the same atrocities, that the words of our Saviour in the text were directed; and though they did not serve as a caution to the men of that generation, they ought to be received as such by all nations, and in all ages, that hold the truth in Christ.

^a Psalm xiv. Ver. 1, 4.

Our Saviour, when he wept over the future calamities of Jerusalem, begins with lamenting, that the things which belonged to her peace were hidden from her eyes; that is, that the Jews were ignorant of the cause of those terrible calamities which were coming upon them; and therefore were not able, by guarding against them, or removing them in time, to prevent their natural effect: the things which belonged to their peace were hidden from them.

The prophecy itself met with so remarkable a completion, that it has been constantly and invincibly applied, as one of the leading proofs of the truth of our Lord's mission: and in the train of this demonstration, every article of it has been critically and accurately compared with the history of the destruction of the city, and the final dispersion of the Jewish people. This account was written by Josephus, who at the beginning of the calamitous war he describes, had taken arms on the popular side, and was their ablest leader.

As it has been the business of the defenders of Christianity above mentioned, to parallel the events recorded by him with the prophecy; so the present subject leads me to select, out of the same history, those causes which, co-operating with the providence of God, produced the catastrophe he relates, and which drew tears from the Redeemer of mankind, when he saw that they were so hidden from the eyes of the Jewish nation, that they would not remove them in their day, and when their existence as a people continued. This I shall do in a series of extracts from the history, and as frequently in the words of Josephus, as the nature and limits of a sermon will admit; giving to these detached passages, the arrangement necessary to their forming a connected representation, intermixing them with some explanatory observations, together with such of the historical facts, as may shew the force of these causes in operation, as well as their tendency.

A new set of principles, embraced by a great part of the nation, was the leading and proximate cause of these signal calamities of the Jews, a sect had recently arisen in Galilee, of which one of the name of Judas was the founder; their tenets were distinguished by that fanaticism of liberty, which always ultimately proves its destruction, where it breaks out; they held that as servants of God, they should not acknowledge any mortal man, as prince or lord over them; ^b esteeming it a degeneracy in every one, who had arms to defend his freedom, to submit even to the mild exercise of sovereign power. ^c It was in the name of liberty that we have taken up arms, exclaimed that ardent partisan of a republic, the high priest Ananus, after Jerusalem was filled with anarchy and murder. ^d

^b Josephus Hudsoni 1720, 1060 a; from which edition all the extracts are taken.

^c Page 1094, line 16, the sections are quoted by Greek numerals, the line of a page by common figures.

^d P. 1173:10

In the perusal of such parts of the history as I examined for this purpose, I was impressed, not only with the similitude of the causes which produced the calamities of the French and Jewish nations, but also with a double parallelism between the crimes of both, and the events which followed them, as far as the consequences of the commotions in France have yet proceeded. Accounts of this kind ought to be drawn up so, as to leave the same impression on the minds of the hearers, which the speaker has received: in what follows, this is attended to; though I have not thought proper to point out any particular instances of these singular parallelisms.

inter-

Eloquence and philosophy, which have been frequently perverted to introduce confusion into society, had been thus abused in Judea. Matthias and Judas, two public teachers of the greatest celebrity, supported extravagant and fanatic interpretations of the ancient laws, to raise actual commotion and insurrection; they were attended by such numbers of the youth of the higher rank, that Josephus calls the multitude of their followers an army; to incite their enthusiasm to the highest pitch, they seem to have assumed the character of inspired teachers, as well as political orators, promising to those who died for their exaggerated tenets, to which they gave the seducing name of the laws of their forefathers, the immediate attainment of immortality of happiness; and denouncing something like an anathema against those who were lukewarm.^e When fanaticism came afterwards to pollute the spirit of liberty, the doctrine of these sophists coalesced with it, and gave it malignity and extension.^f

This spirit of delusion was spread, with great diligence, among the populace of Judea; and every pretext was seized with avidity, for theatrical declamations, loaded with the most exaggerated encomiums of liberty.^g

Nor does any assiduity seem to have been wanted to inculcate the same popular errors, in the countries which bordered upon Judea. The Jewish religion had extended itself much in the neighbouring imperial provinces, particularly Syria: and this unhappy political enthusiasm appears to have struck a deep root in the minds of the proselytes. A sanguinary incursion of the Jews into that province was repulsed; but the strength of the Syrians of their party, in every city, was such, that after their retreat, the natives were divided into two hostile armies; and the safety of one party was supposed to consist in anticipating the plots of the other by their destruction: their days were spent in mutual slaughter, and uncertainty and terror made their nights more insupportable.^h

This deluding and unhappy fascination of the minds of the people had its effects increased by other causes: the manners and morals of the great majority of the Jewish nation were extremely corrupted; this was clearly shewn, by the prevalence of the crime of robbery among the lower class; an infallible criterion of such corruption. In several parts of the country, large gangs of robbers roamed up and down, and committed their depredations in open day; and many joined the political party for innovation, stimulated by the desire of increasing their possessions, and plundering the weak in public commotions.ⁱ

Sedition had been infused into and corrupted the soldiery; for the flagitious Eleazar, general of the Temple-guard, and who at the beginning appears to have commanded the army, was able to secure that important fortress for the insurgents.^k Manahem, celebrated for his ardent and nervous eloquence, and ambitious perhaps of becoming in effect a sovereign, having gathered a party together, surprised the strong fortress of Massada, in the castle of which was contained the arsenal of King Herod, took out the arms, and distributed them to the robbers and low people: the insurgents of the capital put him at their head.^l I may add here, that he fell the first victim of the jealousy of their other leaders.^m

^e 1040 β.

^f 1324 : 43

^g 1085 : 6

^h 1095, β

ⁱ 1084 : 45

^k 1090, β and 1105 : 45

^l 1093, η

^m 1094 : 35

At the beginning of these commotions, many of the nobles and great men countenanced them, who had either imbibed the new principles, or who were influenced by fear, or factious ambition; or who acted with the insurgents, in hopes by their personal authority to impress a direction on their movements less fatal to their country than they would otherwise take; but they soon found the nominal powers committed to them, without effect to restrain the madness of the people: and it was not by military obedience alone (which was in a manner annihilated) that their leaders of the first rank and ability were able to restrain their mutinous soldiers from the pillage and destruction of great cities.ⁿ Those who guided the measures of the nobles, were justly jealous of the designs of Eleazar, whom I have before mentioned; and had taken care, after the calamitous retreat of Cestius, to have him excluded from the greater offices. With the spoils he had then gained, and part of the public treasure, which he converted to his own purposes, he bribed the populace, and got all the effective power into his own hand; and this without the shadow of any regular appointment.^o

Thus undermined, the short-lived empty semblance of authority, with which the nobles and great men of the land had the appearance of being invested, soon entirely vanished: the melancholy remainder of their fate will be presently related. The events of popular commotions mostly depend upon agents of a different rank; and while the former retain the appearance of guiding them, the reality is soon transferred to the latter. Thus at an early period of the war, we find that among those who at first shared the superiority wrested from them were Jesus, the son of Sophias, the chief of the faction of common sailors and beggars, who plundered and set fire to the palace at Tiberias; ^p and Joseph, the natural son of a woman who sold medicines, at the head of a resolute party, took up arms at Gamala against King Agrippa, and declared for liberty; compelling some by force to join his party, and murdering others whom he could not overawe.^q

Josephus, who at first had a great command among the revolvers, thus describes these miserable and atrocious fanatics: they had before been the scorn and off-scouring of the whole country; many of them persons who had dissolutely wasted their former fortunes: these, having first practised their depredations and violence in villages and provincial cities, marched in troops to the metropolis; ^r there, the leaders of the insurrection indulged their crimes with full license; their lust for rapine was insatiable; the houses of the rich were not only entered, searched, and plundered, ^s but their owners were beaten with rods. ^t The murder of men, and the violation of women, they esteemed as sport; ^u glutted with spoil and blood, they consumed in the temple what they had acquired by murder, in drunkenness and gluttony, ^w or ostentatiously glittering in the costly spoils of their miserable victims, they wallowed in public, in the turpitude of the vilest impurities. ^x

ⁿ 941 : 2 : 30

^o 1105 : 45

^p 910 : 44

^q 922 : 13

^r 1177 : 45

^s 1201 : 2

^t 1172 : 12

^u 1201 : 39

^w 1178 : 1

^x 1201 : 9

A very great part of these insurgents were distinguished by the name of Sicarians; this is derived from the latin word *Sica*, a dagger: they went privately armed with a curved dagger under their robes, with which they perpetrated innumerable murders, frequently aggravated with the most inhuman species of treachery.^y

Many of their rulers and great men, who had concurred in the insurrection at first, alarmed by these enormities, joined with the majority of the inhabitants of the city to suppress them; they were animated to this attempt chiefly by the spirit of Ananus the high priest; some appearance of success against this bloody anarchy attended them at the beginning: but the fanatics and Sicarians, seeing the end of their tyranny, and the punishment of their crimes to be approaching, called the Idumeans into the city to their assistance; a ferocious race of men, whom the historian paints as prone to commotion, rushing to war as to a banquet,^z and by nature most savage in murder;^a thus strengthened they obtained a victory, in which Ananus, said to have been above measure attached to liberty, and an idolater of democracy, was slain by them.^b After which Jesus, the second man in that party, with twelve thousand of their nobles, were cut off in one massacre; and every man who lamented the loss of a friend, was doomed to perish by the same death.^c The pretence of this horrible carnage was, that the unhappy victims had conspired to deliver up their country to the Roman emperor.^d

These were not the transitory effects of popular fury butting forth in a sudden tempest, and then subsiding again as soon as its dreadful purpose was accomplished. The whole frame of civil society was shattered to pieces; violence annihilated the power both of making and administering laws; in the place of public debate, the members of the assembly were seized unaccused, loaded with fetters, and immediately delivered to death;^e when the innocence of the prisoner, prevailing over the rage and clamours and menaces of the surrounding multitude, had extorted an acquittal from the magistrate, he was dragged away to slaughter, and in the temple! and the judges driven by the sword from their seats, their lives being spared to be the messengers to the citizens, that their slavery was complete.^f

Not content with the ruin of individuals, these criminals added sacrilege to robbery; they plundered the treasury of the temple, and seized the holy vessels dedicated to the daily ministration of the altar; not even the ewers which the great Augustus and his Empress had presented to the holy edifice escaped, although a homage to their religion, which, by exalting its honour among all nations, must have rendered them more sacred in the eyes of a people who would compass sea and land to make one proselyte.^g The cedars of Mount Libanus of singular beauty, the costly and pious offering of King Agrippa, of which there was a great quantity prepared for the repairing and adorning of the temple, they converted into the military machines used in that age, and to other purposes of war.^h

^y 895 : 23. 1324 : 43 et alibi

^z 1177 : 12

^a 1182 : 41

^b 1183 : 27

^c 1184 : 14

^d 1176 : 48

^e 1179 : 9

^f 1184 : 24

^g 1255 : 48

^h 1214 : 13

They took the appointments to the higher orders of the priesthood into their own hands, and neglecting the former qualifications for that office; they conferred it upon unknown men of low family, who, through consciousness of the defects of their titles, and fear of being deprived of their new appointments, might be compelled to suffer or to second their rapacity and fury.ⁱ Thus they trampled upon the dignity of the high priesthood, by compelling one Plannias to accept of it; a man of that grossness of rustic ignorance, that he did not know what the office was; him they dressed in pontifical robes, like an actor upon a stage, prompting him, from time to time, in what he was to perform, with the wantonness of laughter, contempt, and profanation.^k

To finish this branch of the melancholy history of their iniquities—in a land of rapine and ferocity, not even the labour necessary to the support of the lives of inhabitants can be preserved: famine raged in the city; and these sanguinary robbers augmented the terror of that dreadful visitation, by inflicting new miseries upon its victims, although their crimes had so well provided for them, that no necessity urged them on to more;^l they broke into the houses of the famished citizens in search of provisions; where they found any, the owner was beaten with rods, as having attempted to conceal them; where none, he was tortured, as having affected a concealment.^m

In the beginning of these calamities, the friends of their country and of public order had a prospect open upon them of their speedy termination. An army of the Roman emperor made its way very near to the city, but it was compelled to flee with loss and disgrace; and this hope of safety, which had been looked up to with such trembling anxiousness of expectation, being lost, many of the Jewish nobility, who had hitherto remained in the city, fled into the territories of the empire,ⁿ and many sold their possessions to flee;^o to obstruct their escape, all the passages leading out of the country were closely guarded, and whoever was taken at these posts was executed as a fugitive.^p Numbers of rich men were slain, under the pretence that they intended to abandon their country;^q and all who were suspected of it, or of being secretly inclined to the Romans, shared the same fate, while universal terror repressed all lamentation.^r

The situation of the greater body of the people was, beyond measure, deplorable; they wished for the success of the Roman emperor and the kings united with him, to free them from the tyranny of these execrable assassins,^s who, though inferior in number, having arms in their hands, were irresistible, and compelled those who abhorred them to be the companions or the victims of their crimes;^t while death was the punishment they held out to all who proposed treaty or surrender.^u And Titus, whose unwilling arms these enormities dragged forward to destroy them with their city, is cited by Josephus, as declaring, that the great body of the people were thus, by force, imprisoned for inevitable destruction.^w

ⁱ 1170 : 34

^k 1171 : 15

^l 1246 : 12

^m 1245 : 16

ⁿ 1105 : 15

^o 1244 : 49

^p 1188 : 2

^q 1245 : 11

^r 1213 : 41

^s 1213 : 36

^t 1153 : 25

^u 1237 : 45

^w 955 : 4

Nor were these conspirators against the first laws of humanity and nature, without feeling from their own crimes, calamities and terrors similar to those they had brought upon their countrymen. The pressure of the Roman arms being withdrawn awhile by the defeat of Cestius, and the renewal of the war postponed by other circumstances, they broke into two hostile factions, and in the bosom of one of these was formed a third, between whom and their former associates a war took place. A sedition within a sedition---and this vile party became, as Josephus styles it, a mad beast tearing out its own entrails.* The sacrilegious perfidy of a plotted massacre, at a solemn festival in the temple, reduced the number of the parties again to two; these maintained an inveterate war against each other, intermitted only when they were obliged to sustain the attacks of the Romans, or when the lust of rapine and blood armed them against their fellow citizens; on these occasions they were united. Whatever divisions or sub-divisions they were formed into, the leader of each, desirous to grasp all power into his own hand, was perpetually attempting the lives of those of the others. Thus Eleazar caused Menahem to be slain, who, for a short period, seemed to have every thing under his direction, the insurgents having conferred the command of the metropolis upon him.* But I shall not accumulate instances of execrable men, murdered by those of equal or greater criminality, from the time in which the city was first made a scene of carnage, and the temple a perpetual slaughter-house, to that when both were buried in their own ruins.

My object has been to show, that fatal perversion of principle, that turpitude of manners, that licentiousness and depravity of the multitude, and that series of crimes which brought this destruction upon Jerusalem, and against which our Saviour, in this celebrated prophecy, so pathetically warns that city. I shall now briefly run over the most remarkable events which took place in this war, as well those which retarding the catastrophe, made it more fatal, as those which directly co operated with the causes above stated.

In the beginning of the war, the Roman Emperor sent his general Cestius with a mighty army to attack the city, which sheltered these parricides of their country; his progress was, upon the whole, such that, at first, he seemed upon the very point of finishing the war, when he was driven back with great slaughter of his horsemen and footmen, the loss of his treasure, and of his engines of war, his whole army having narrowly escaped destruction. This opened the rich imperial province of Syria to the invasion of the Jews, incensed by a great slaughter of their countrymen at Caesarea, in which they destroyed many towns and cities, and carried death and devastation every where; they likewise extended their incursions into the territories of Tyre; small in extent, but celebrated in sacred and profane history, as the most commercial state in the ancient world; some of the cities thereof they took and plundered. The torrent of this invasion was put a stop to, and they met a severe chastisement for the ravages they had committed; but quiet did not return to these afflicted provinces by the repulse of the Jews; the dissensions between their partisans in those countries, and the other inhabitants, yet continued to make them a scene of intestine violence and

bloodshed. At length the armies of the empire under Vespasian returned towards Judea to put an end to this bloody anarchy: the kings of the surrounding countries joined their armies to his: these were Agrippa, king of Chalcis; Sohemus, king of Emessa; Antiochus, king of Commagene; and Malchus, of Arabia. By the conclusion of the third year of the war, all the cities and strongholds of the Jews, which hindered the besieging of Jerusalem, were taken; and in the following, that city, wasted by the most destructive famine upon record, attacked by a powerful enemy without, those within slaughtering each other with more than hostile malignity, was laid totally desolate, according to the prophecy of our Saviour:---the dreadful punishment of perverted principles of liberty inflamed into licentiousness, licentiousness into anarchy, and a succession of crimes to which they opened the way, and which, in atrocity, had never then been equalled.

I am not speaking against a sober and regulated spirit of freedom: that man is equally the enemy to society, who would wither it into nerveless frigidity, or inflame it into the fury of fanaticism; the latter and the former are alike fatal to its existence; and its sober defenders must, at every period, be most vigilant to guard it on that side on which the attack is made. With respect to human life, an emaciated decline is not a surer forerunner of its extinction, than the bloated corpulence of the dropsy: whatever exceeds the limits of its natural standard in its growth, has its existence soon terminated; and when the energy of this principle has passed over the bounds of good order, its force has been spent upon itself and to its own destruction.

But I shall not enter much upon this subject in the abstract; something I shall, however, say on the effects of a popular enthusiasm of the principles of liberty; something of a new crime of duplicity, a new profligate species of sophistry, which is currently used to rouse the passions of the populace to that delirium.

When the multitude has recently seized the actual exercise of dominion, they will be jealous of the abuse of power wherever lodged, and especially where it has been formerly lodged; and this jealousy will not confine itself to the persons of their former governors, but will extend to the whole class of men from which they were ordinarily taken; they will suppose in them a kind of joint interest with the former, and that the expectations they had been brought up in, will attach them, not only to the plenitude, but also to the old abuses of the old power, which they had always looked forward to as what might one day become their own; and this suspicion will persuade them ultimately, that authority deposited in the hands of individuals of either of these two sets of men, is the first step back to the supposed oppressive domination they have newly cast off.

They will, therefore, go considerably lower to place their confidence; it will be given to persons of a very different description; and their confidence is power and office. But though a new set of men may obtain the names of offices, their former state of depression, contrasted with their present elevation; their want of personal weight, compared with the dignity of their predecessors; their recent equality with those whom they are now to restrain and govern, will greatly diminish their effective power, even in the ordinary course of affairs; and

and they must become totally inefficient at such a crisis, when licentiousness trampling upon order, has but just cast off the restraints of a more vigorous, awful, and established authority.

The actual power of government in the hands of such rulers, and their power of persuading the multitude, or that part of the multitude which controuls the rest, and has given them their shadow of eminence, are the same thing; it is by persuasion, by influence, or by force only, that mankind can be governed. Now the multitude, under such rulers, is to be swayed by its passions alone, for when they have enjoyed the guidance of things for a short time, they will not at once lay it down, and instantly be re-converted into an inert mass; and going on, therefore, to act, and in situations so new to them, if they be ever so well disposed, they must, of necessity, act before their understandings can be informed, and passions or maxims analogous to their dictates will be the only motives which can work upon them; nor will they suffer themselves to be led aside from, or otherwise frustrated of, the ends thus taken up by them; hence, likewise, power will be conferred on those only whom they think most likely to use it for the same ends; that is, on those who enter into the same passions and views with the same fervor, or those more dangerous and atrocious agents who copy out or surpass their appearance and effects in cold blood. Such will be the character of their new rulers; and the only use they can derive from their powers, while they hold them, will be to give to the movements of the multitude, varied incessantly and rapidly in every direction which the chance, or the folly, or the passion of the hour can impress upon them, something like a unity of impulse. Now, the passions of the multitude, which such commotions call into exercise with terrible and resistless effect, are envy, deprecation, and revenge; and the ostensible ruler must go something further with them than being blind to these enormities; he must be subservient to them;--- fatal are the ends he is raised to a mock elevation to promote; relentless and atrocious the passions he must possess or simulate to rule.

If such a people should endeavour to put a stop even to the greater part of that progression of evils to which the tumultuous dissolution of an established government leads, or pause immediately after its first ferment, that is, when its jealousy, extended to the persons of all their former governors, and the whole class of men who had ordinarily risen to that eminence, has excluded them from offices, it will have already lost the possibility of safety, without a quick retreat; for thus, not only the ability of all those whom practical experience had formed to the difficult art of governing mankind, must be flung away, but also that order of men whom the united discipline of frequent reflections upon it, of the frequent conversation of men practised in it, and an unremitted supervision of their measures, had raised to the next degree of aptitude for this great trust, will be passed by, to introduce a set of new men, totally uninformed in, and, by consequence, totally unequal to the task; for the uninformed natural faculties, the most adapted to any object, require much discipline and previous exercise, before they can be brought into actual use with full advantage: and the cunning of the workman availeth him alone in the art he has been trained to by daily use. He that heweth down the thick cedar tree, shall not fashion it with the chissel to make a carved image thereof, and bring it to an excellent work;

work; nor he that smiteth the iron on the anvil, be numbered with those that handle the pen of the ready writer; nor he whose work is in the loom, or whose talk is of bullocks, his voice shall not be heard in the gate among the honourable of the people, nor shall his seat be in the assembly of the wise men. A state in which all men, who had a chance of having acquired the practical elements of civil government, should, at a dangerous crisis, be excluded from office, resembles a ship entangled on a dangerous and rocky coast of some desert country, when night is closing around, and struggling to get off against the blast of a mighty and strong wind beating full upon it, in which the passengers, more numerous than the mariners, but totally unskilled in their art, should, by force, wrest all the direction out of their hands and take it to themselves, and their eyes shall be opened, and they shall discern their folly too late, when the scattered bands of those who have hardly escaped with their lives, shall return from viewing the desolate waste on every side around them, and shall sit down together in bitterness of soul to weep on the barren shore, that their eyes shall never behold again the cheerful throng of the highway, or the sun arising on the towers and pinnacles of their abiding city, or hear the voice of the reaper rejoicing in his harvest, or the song of him that treadeth the wine-press.

How great, how numerous, are the losses of society in such a commotion! not only that generation passeth away, without the chance of happiness; the misrule and calamity with which it is overwhelmed, becomes perpetuated upon their posterity. Under such gross and unknowing rulers, all that refines and adorns human society perishes; all cultivated manners degenerate; the collected wisdom of ages, the labours of the philosopher, whose sagacious dexterity has laid open the secrets of nature, and enriched life with a larger use of her abundant stores; of the moralist, who has made the nobler treasures of wisdom and virtue our own; of the legislators, whose institutes have blessed the several fraternities into which the world is divided: these are levelled in one ruin, and swept out of the land with the besom of destruction; and in exchange thereof, a supercilious and ferocious barbarism shall afflict the sons of her people with an iron rod, and the confusion and tempestuous flux and reflux of extravagance and outrage; until the closing darkness shall thicken around, and desolation shall call unto solitude her first-born, and they shall wave their ensigns over the land as a token.

After this consideration of the consequences of the fanaticism of liberty, I shall employ a little time, to consider a new mean which has been employed to excite it, which, in proportion to its success, must make its devastations surpass in magnitude and terror, whatever the tragical page of history has ever ascribed to them; I mean the doctrine of the equality of the rights of man. The phrase, 'Equality of Rights,' has two senses; each of which I shall lay down. Our rights are of three kinds: those of personal security, of liberty, and of property. It is the last class which is to be considered; rights of property may be said to be equal in two senses; in degree or in extent; these rights may differ in degree, as that of the absolute proprietor of a thing, and the usufructuary; and without doubt, the right of all the individuals in society, in what they hold under one and the same title or interest, is equal in degree; and in this country, the free-
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hold of the poor man in his little cottage, is in law, and in actual enjoyment, as secure as that of his rich neighbour in his extensive and magnificent demesne: and the greatest peer in the land must perform suit and service in the courts of the laborious yeoman; whose industry has purchased, or whose ancestors have bequeathed him a little manor: and in this sense of the term Equality every man is equal in his rights, and in the actual enjoyment of them: but the more ordinary way of considering rights is in their extent, or the number and value of the subjects to which the rights of the individual extend; and in this acceptation, if two men be equal in rights, the value of their property will be equal; and to make all men equal in rights, the mass of general property must be equalised; and this is the only sense, in which the right of things are ever conceived to differ, or to be equal, by the generality of the lower class of mankind: it seldom being of use to them to compare rights in other points of view; very few of them have extended their thoughts to this comparison: with the multitude, the equality of the right of property, and a right to equality of property, are absolutely convertible terms.

Many have assiduously preached up this equality, knowing that what they taught, was received in the latter sense by the common people; and intending it so to be: and when they are pressed with the consequences of a doctrine, which gives license to general devastation; and, by ultimately arming every man against his neighbour, not only dissolves society into a number of disconnected individuals, but establishes a state of war, of all against all; they defend themselves by proving the proposition in the former sense, that every right is equal, considered as to its degree: now as the criminality or innocence of every principle is to be judged, not from the narrowest limits of the sense of its terms, but from the meaning in which it is known it will be received by the hearer, which is to be taken as that intended to be conveyed, or its cognisable sense, no delusion has been more criminal, than the terrible fallacy, intentionally conveyed in the ambiguous maxim of these sophists; to all of them indeed this duplicity is not to be imputed; some have covered this doctrine with a slight veil only, made as transparent as their utmost dexterity could weave it; and have not hesitated even to draw that aside to censure the caution of those who held the same opinion, for some suspicion they have expressed, that it may be dangerous to reveal it although true.

The reason which, at this juncture, may have induced some men, not of desperate fortunes, to connive at, or secretly favour the currency of this principle, to excite the minds of the common people against government, may very probably have been, their falling in with the sentiments of a writer, who certainly had his share in the origin, and in a great part of the progress of the fermentation now subsisting, that the nation having been frequently duped by professions of patriotism, dictated by self-interest, and terminating in imposture, has been led into a conviction, that all are alike false; and the zeal they were once capable of exciting, has sunk into inactivity and despondence. Thus convinced that the ancient topics, by which the passions of the populace had been so often roused, had lost almost all their effects, by the frequency of their repetition; they have judged it absolutely necessary, to permit something of favour and spirit to be given to their vapidness, by adding the stimulus of this new doctrine to them; and

re-kindling the dying languor of public principle, in the populace, by the invigorating prospect of general plunder.

It is not to be understood, that those who thus in secret are not adverse to these notions obtaining some extension, who countenance the men who propagate them, so far as to act with them for certain purposes; and endeavour to draw a veil over their progress and practices; are capable of taking an active part in diffusing such principles of atrocity; or of wishing their ultimate establishment. What they expect from their first effects, they look forward to with pleasure; thinking to convert them to their own ends; and the second, and all that are to follow, they confide they shall be able, with the greatest facility, to restrain; it is not necessary to employ any arguments to shew the guilt of such experiments upon the well-being of society; and even upon its being as such. It is to their prudence only an address is to be made: and their claim to this quality, estimated from their present conduct, seems much to resemble that of the inhabitants of some valley, lying between two ranges of hills, which suffers temporarily from drought; but would become highly productive, if a stream could be led through it to water it; and to effect this, a great lake, which is constantly eating away its banks, being situated on the very verge of the heights which almost overhang them, they are determined to cut a sufficient opening through the slight impediment to the supply of their wants; or persuaded to let it be done for them: but, blind leaders of the blind! ye shall too late lament, that the cataract from on high cannot be turned aside; and when the floods of the mighty waters are let loose, ye shall not call to them with the voice of your power, and say, hitherto shall ye come and no further.

These arguments I have ventured to bring from the code of political morality; I know our preachers have for a long time, either totally abstained from the use of such topics; or when the subject has forced them forward, they have been faintly introduced, and illustrated with that hesitating reluctance, which is always manifest in a discourse, the matter of which powerfully draws one way, while considerations which are foreign to it, induce the preacher to deflect it from its natural and best direction; to give force and even place to arguments of this kind, in sermons, has been almost universally reprobated. And this act of proscription, has been supported by many strong instances of their abuse.

Yet this is to be taken as the evidence of one side only; and is of the nature, of what the advocate for one party in a cause, is held to produce; but he who would decide the point as a legitimate judge, and is desirous to impress us with a conviction of the validity of his sentence, would be obliged to weigh the uses, which have been derived from the sober application of such principles, in the addresses of the clergy to the people, against the abuses, which may be so proved: and he would find that the tenor of our own history, at least, deposes against this prohibition. Beside, in its present state, the argument on which it is founded, is one of those forms, which are illegitimate, and therefore it is not conclusive.

But as many authorities may be alledged, making against what I have said, I shall therefore shew this error absolutely, that is, from the nature of moral principles; and that of the duty of a minister of the Gospel: and in order to this,
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first, let the nature of that love which connects every man to his kind, be considered.

Tracing this affection from that center where it commences, to the extreme circuit to which it dilates itself, to embrace all human kind, we shall find it, as it expands, under different modifications, assuming the form of the finest and noblest affections which dignify our nature. Let us begin with the narrow circle of domestic life; there we owe to it much of the tenderest charities of human nature; those of father, brother, husband: its next operations are more widely diffused; and it here becomes that generous and disinterested friendship, which binds kindred minds and kindred virtues together; and further dilated, it unites these insulated groups in the useful and agreeable amity of neighbourhood: and in the exchange of those smaller mutual good offices and attentions, on which so many of the enjoyments of life depend: expanding in a yet wider circle over to the whole political community in which we live; it becomes the parent of more august virtues, and wears the sacred and reverend name of patriotism: and still continuing its progress, until it dilates itself over all the tribes of mankind, it terminates only in universal benevolence.

Now it is the duty of the preacher to excite his congregation to the virtuous charities of affinity, of friendship, of neighbourhood; to enter fully upon every topic to enforce them; to point out the means to obtain their best effects; to examine with accuracy into the whole nature of those false judgements and vices, which obstruct the good ends they tend to procure: employing every aid he can derive, from the treasures of wisdom which time has consigned to him in trust for the benefit of mankind, joined to the best exertions of his own reason, to refute the one and to chastise and restrain the other. And does not the law of continuance indicate our duty to be the same, with respect to the same affection in its two further modifications; the love of the political society to which we belong, and of human kind in general? this must be granted to be true of the latter; with what shadow of pretension then can it be denied of the former?

Beside the rules of human conduct laid down in the divine law, and the duties on which its ministers are to instruct the people, are co-extensive: nor do we find in that law, a dispensation from inculcating any one, or doing it with hesitation and incompletely: now every duty has a set of principles on which it depends, a mode in which it is best illustrated; and if we do not urge these principles with our utmost force, and in that mode, we desert our own. Now the divine law instructs us in every duty, both by positive precepts, and by the examples of actions recorded in it with approbation or censure: and from these two sources conjointly, we may deduce from the holy Scriptures, the greater outlines of every branch of political morality; that is, of our duty to those rulers God has set over us; and to the society in which we live, considered as a nation.

I will therefore here point out the confirmation of what is above laid down, against that criminal perversion of the spirit of liberty, which unbraces and disjoins effective government, receives from the written word of God.

But this I must preface with the following observation; that no man who admits the Scripture as God's law, can doubt of his absolute obligation to

every thing contained therein. He who is a Christian, must so far equally believe that his salvation depends upon his obedience to the whole of what is written in the law of Christ; that he cannot be saved thereby, if he select such parts as he chuses to obey, and rejects such others as he does not. The system of the laws given us by Jesus Christ, follow the nature of all others in this respect: he who is subject to them, cannot at his choice obey some and disobey others; for such ability includes the power of dispensing with or repealing them; which power must be as great as that which enacted them.

But I hope that we have not so learned Christ, that we have only to have his commandments recited to us, to believe them to be our duty; and that we have the honesty of nature, when we know our duty to endeavour to the utmost to fulfil it; and not suffer the depravity of our wills to press self-delusion with its entanglements and subtilties into their service, so to hoodwink our submissive reason, that "seeing we see not, and hearing we do not understand."

Some of the commands of the divine law, on the duty of a peaceable obedience to legal government, I shall now lay down. The nature of our oath of allegiance, and the obligation it draws after it, is declared in the following terms: "Keep the king's commandments, and that in regard to the oath of God."^a Our Saviour has commanded us to contribute of our substance to the support of our sovereigns, in the exercise of their dignified offices, in the following words: "Render unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things which are God's."^b In his life he was to give an example of all the duties he taught; and possibly, having in view the reluctance with which self-interest always acquits itself of this duty; to render that example more declaratory of its obligation more conspicuous, and thereby a stronger counterbalance to this strong propensity of evading it, he wrought a miracle to fulfil it. In regard to the reverence in which a sovereign is to be had, we are commanded to fear the Lord and the king:^c and again, to fear God and honour the king.^d These commandments conjoining piety to God, and duty to our prince, clearly set that duty next in rank and consequence to that of our Creator, however great the interval; that is, it constitutes the first of duties to our fellow creatures.^e Those who commence a resistance to power, legally exercised, must have it in contemplation either to be punished with great severity, or finally to overthrow it; for its consequences seldom can be expected to stop short of one of these two extremes. Where the first of these is foreseen to be probable, no one dares to attempt such a resistance; it is the

^a Eccles. chap. viii. ver. 2.

^b Mark xii. 17. Luke xx. 25.

^c Ps. xxiv. 21.

^d 1 Pet. ii. 17.

^e It follows from this mode of illustrating our duty to our king, that we ought to express ourselves to him, and of him and of his estate, in a manner the most decorous: and where a language has two sets of terms, or forms of speaking, to express the same thing, with respect to different objects; one applied to those of great dignity, the other to those which are mean and contemptible; the application of the latter to kings, expressly contravenes these commandments to honour them: it is an endeavour to diffuse contemptuous impressions of their office: a breach of this rule is of the nature of the offence of those, who are not afraid to "speak evil of dignities:"* who set little by that command, "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought,"† who despise government and dominion, presumptuous are they and self-willed.

* 2 Pet. ii. 10.

† Eccles. x. 20.

second case only we have to consider; such attempts have seldom taken place without involving a nation in the greatest of evils, a civil war: to determine upon such resistance is to will all its consequences, foreseen as necessary or highly probable; and every death occasioned by such a war is a murder in the original promoters of it. Such resistance is therefore a crime, the fatal consequences of which are equalled by no other; and against it the Almighty God himself has issued this command, and annexed this penalty to the breach of it; "resist not the power, for he that resisteth shall receive to himself damnation."

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Rom. xiii. 2.

In the Scripture the relation God stands in to us is very frequently illustrated by metaphors taken from those of paternity and sovereignty; he is called our Father and our King. One observation is to be made upon the second of these metaphors; if the monarchical form of government be in its nature bad, or, which is the same thing, if the happiness of mankind be less, and their unhappiness greater under it, than under some other possible form or forms, it must be in consequence of its nature, that is, from a divine constitution; from which the nature of every thing, or combination of things, is equally derived; therefore those who admit the Scripture to be the word of God, and hold this opinion of monarchy, make the Divine Being very frequently illustrate the nature of his own dominion, (*absit verbo blasphemia*) by representing it as analogous to a human form of government, which is by his own constitution less perfect than some others, and productive of unnecessary evils.

With some it will give weight to these moral maxims, inculcating obedience to princes, to find their duties to their subjects laid down with at least equal force and frequency in Scripture. There are few of the crimes and weaknesses of sovereigns, which are not censured in the following extracts of Scripture:

Tyranny and extortion—"As a roaring lion, and a raging bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people." Prov. xxviii. 15.

"A prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor; but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days." Prov. xx. 16.

Want of good faith—"Excellent speech becometh not a fool; much less do lying lips a prince." Prov. xvii. 7.

Confidence in informers—"If a ruler hearkeneth to lies, his servants are wicked." Prov. xxvii. 12.

Jealousy of eminent subjects, and confidence in unworthy favourites—"There is an evil that I have seen, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich set in low places: I have seen servants on horses, and princes walking as servants." Ecclesi. x. 5, &c.

"It is not seemly, that a servant should have rule over princes." Prov. xix. 10.

Pursuit of criminal pleasures—"Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways unto that which destroyeth kings; it is not for kings to drink wine, nor princes strong drink." Prov. xxxi. 3.

I am not prepared to give to this matter the consideration it deserves; I shall only add here to what is said above, the following particulars, as they are brought together by the prophet Ezekiel: A sovereign shall grant an estate of inheritance, of his own lands, to his own sons only; grants of land to his ministers and favourites shall be for a term not to exceed seven years, at the end of which they shall revert to the prince; thus his dignity was provided for, and the charges on the people for its support, and that of his family, if not prevented, would increase with much less rapidity; while a dangerous accumulation of property in the crown would be probably hindered; a provision which seems to have been wanted in the institutions of the nations who settled in Europe, on the different portions of the ruins of the Roman empire. A prince likewise was not to be made heir to one of his subjects; it may be seen in the Roman history, how a contrary custom permitted by law was perverted to the grossest tyranny. Ezek. xlvi. 16, 17, 18. and Tacitus de Vit. Agr. & alibi. Such are the prohibitions we find. The following are commands or maxims of justice, piety, or policy, for princes. "The God of Israel said, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." 2 Chron. xxiii. 3.

On the qualifications requisite to governors—"I am understanding—by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Prov. viii. 15.

On population—"In the multitude of people is the king's honour; but the want of people is the destruction of the prince." Prov. xiv. 28.

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And

And against the "presumptuous self-willed spirit" of innovation, gratified only during the turbulent and dangerous instants of the transitions of society from one state to another, in that covenant which requires us to maintain peace on earth, as we would draw down a blessing on ourselves from heaven; we have this command, "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given unto change; for their calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the ruin of them."⁸

Among the Jews, at the crisis of which I have given you an account, the effects of the perverted and fanatical doctrines of liberty were increased by a degeneracy of manners and of morals, and, indeed, in the midst of a degenerating community, these principles, the germ of which is always latent in many sanguine and irregular dispositions and understandings, in every nation and age, are frequently found to spring up with pernicious luxuriance; and are zealously fostered by those who hope to shelter their crimes, or repair their extravagance under their protection and outrage. And although this nation be not dishonourably distinguished among the nations of the earth, in morality or manners, yet wealth and prosperity have not failed to produce their usual effects among us, in a degree too extensive; those of the higher rank in society often think it a privilege peculiarly attached to them, to set no bounds to their gratifications; and to leave the vices and follies of their inferiors behind them, at a distance at least proportional to that of their station; and as the space between them and ruin is a little greater, they increase their endeavours in the requisite degree, to enable them to finish their course in the same time.

What numbers do we see, in the middle and ascending classes of society, who, having their appetites whetted by the invidious view of the enjoyments of those above them, dare to imitate them, and press forward with emulation to be undone? purchasing thus a short period, alternately chequered with unenjoyed feverish riot, and those intervals when bitterness of anxiety for the future shall corrode as poison in the bosom, and the gird of secret shame shall be as when one cutteth a nerve, at the sad price of penury and distress, and the conflict of inflamed appetite with utter privation and contempt.

And among men of lower situation, this folly or this guilt has involved multitudes, with their families, in the want of necessaries, and rendered them incapable of subsisting without depredations and crimes. This diffused and miserable depravity has strength enough to lead men to the perpetration of such actions for their relief, which no illusion of their own understandings can palliate, no guilty sophist will fabricate an apology for; no formed party will defend in concert; execrated and proscribed by the whole body of society, and pursued and avenged by its united force. How must it therefore open the unexercised, half pre-disposed mind to the reception of falsified and perverted principles, with a broad glare of delusion flung round them, and corrupted to destroy the existence of regular government, to which they are already al-

And we should enter very far into practical details, if we were to accumulate all the texts to be found of this kind, and to take the principles of many measures greatly praised in the Scripture, and arrange them as scriptural maxims of policy.

⁸ Prov. xxiv. 21, 22.

most enemies, because it is an enemy to them? when acting upon such principles, there is a superior probability of attaining the same end in the highest degree; and escaping the whole payment of the terrible price for it. It is hardly in any mind, that the error it wishes to be true, is not an overmatch for that truth which calls for great sacrifices, except in that of the man of virtue: but these men are lost to virtue, and many of them to the last faint desire of recovering it.

Hence there is a set of men, in every rank, somewhat proportioned to its numbers, who are relatively or absolutely needy, goaded on by want on one side, and by passions irritated by vicious habits on the other. And it is thus, that this nation nourishes in itself an army hostile to its own peace and security, ready in the lawless outrage of a day to repair the prodigality and waste, and force an indemnity for the crimes of years.

It is to be lamented that these dispositions, and the guilt which leads the way to them, are so frequent among us; that like the crowning city of old, whose merchants were as princes, and her traffickers were the honourable of the earth, by the multitude of her merchandise violence hath filled the midst of the land, and we have sinned;^a that the dissonance and clamour of riot and intemperance are heard in our walls; that impurity spreads its seductions in the face of day, and in the evening is the thief. Intestine discord and public misery are the natural consequences of the prevalence of these principles and vices: and we generally find, that when they obtain in a nation, all external circumstances either have, or soon acquire, that arrangement which gives them full effect.

To this catalogue of evils prevailing among us, another is to be added, to which much of the extent and prevalence of the rest may be traced up: whatever may be the distinguished good qualities of the present age, and it certainly does not want some, an attention to and a zeal in matters of religion is not among the number. This complaint, although it be as much disregarded, as if the truth of it were of little consequence, or its falsity evident, admits of a proof. In general conversation, at any period, we are sure to hear frequent mention made of those principles which are then in general prevalence and esteem; but at this day, in reckoning up the good qualities of those who are mentioned with esteem, their piety is seldom enumerated; a proof both that it is of little estimation with the generality of speakers, and of their opinion that they expect that it will make but a small favourable impression on the hearers. Now piety is the principle of life to moral virtue; it is where there is a sincere and zealous attachment to the truths of religion, and an awful and deep sense of its sanctions are ingrafted upon the mind, that the fruit of good works is to be expected. How should an attachment to virtue be wrought as deeply into the heart of man, as it might be, unless he expects with reverential and confirmed belief, that the happiness of eternity shall be its reward? the necessity of this does not appear to be attended to as it ought, for Christianity teaches us that this life is a state of moral education and trial; it would therefore be contrary to the latter end of our being placed here, if Providence

^a Ezek. xxviii. 16.

had fenced human virtue round with any superfluous strength of defence. It is of the essence of such a state, that it should stand in need of the aid of every principle favourable to it, to be barely sufficiently secured, and that in the utmost degree of vigour an assiduous cultivation can bring it to. It follows, that he who believes in Christianity must admit the necessity of impressing profoundly on his mind a sense, that the happiness of eternity shall be the reward of virtue; eternal punishment the retribution of all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, in order to establish a sufficient attachment to the former: for if any man believe, both that human virtue could be sufficiently secure in this state of probation and education, which is the great end of our being placed here, without that frequent meditation on future rewards and punishments, which shall so imprint them in the inmost recesses of his mind, that they become habitually present to it as the constant motive to good actions; and likewise in the truth and reality of sanctions of religion, he must, at the same time, believe them something more than necessary to such a state of probation; that is, that they are superfluous to the great plan of Providence which respects mankind.

It is from an attentive meditation on the sanctions of the divine law alone, that we can acquire the genuine and a sincere spirit of piety; those virtues which it generates or fosters modify human actions in every thing, and thus it greatly tends to form the character of man as a citizen; and the spirit of nations, through the medium of the private characters it forms: and although I may have already exceeded the limits custom seems to have prescribed to the extent of our instructions to our congregations, I shall not leave this important truth in such general terms, but enter somewhat into the particular illustration to it. How far religion teaches us to obey our sovereign and the magistrate has been before stated, and I mean not to resume it; but, as far as I can, to weed out of the mind any lurking jealousy against an unreserved obedience to its dictates, by showing how, at the same time, it tends to preserve the noble and ingenuous spirit of liberty, in that temperate and healthy state, which make it the blessing we admire.

I first consider the consequence of the first of its principles, the evangelical spirit of charity; with our equals this virtue draws closer every bond of connection, and multiplies their number; her condescension makes her extend her arms to raise her inferior nearer to her: the attraction of the candid deference of her manners makes her superiors wish to diminish the distance of their station. All are drawn nearer to all, and society is held more closely together, and that by mutual love, not danger, it forms a reticulated mass extending every way, in which the cords are multiplied, strengthened, braced, above, around, beneath; and every rude shock of external violence is more instantaneously and acutely felt through the whole. It thus acquires its best compactness and union; it keeps danger of every shape more at a distance; it gains an increased respect from its governors, whom confidence in itself, joined with the spirit on which its increased union is founded, will teach it to repay, with that nobler subjection dignifying the giver and receiver, which springs from love.

The love of our country is derived from the love of our countrymen; it is the pleasure of that sensation which imagination attaches to those objects of inanimate nature they call theirs; makes the mild azure of our skies more lovely to us; adds a new elegance of tint to the sprightly and tender verdure of the summer; gives new beauty to the undulated variety of hill and valley; strengthening every constituent motive to that fascinated attachment to our native soil, which wins its way unto the ingenuous bosom, and interweaves itself so with every earthly affection, that they can only have one common period; that charity which knits us into closer bonds of affection to each other, individually, must increase the force of that sentiment which binds us to the whole, collectively, or the love of our country as a country; it not only augments this patriotic passion, it purifies its ends, directs its exertions, and elevates it to the whole nobility of its nature.

On the other hand it is to be observed, that uncharitable and discordant habits of mind repel man from man; it is by external compression, not mutual attraction, that the individuals of such a society can be forced into a transitory and hollow semblance of union; and even then, the effect of this vice diminishes and tends to destroy the effect of such external pressure by the whole of its own strength.

The duty of temperance deserves likewise to be considered in this point of view, both in conjunction with some others and simply. Now temperance is the health of the soul in as eminent a degree as of her mechanic instrument the body. Restraint from acts of sensuality preserves the intellectual faculties of reason and imagination in their firmest tone of vigour; it prevents also many present sufferings, and anxiety for the future, and self-reproach, the heavy clogs of its operations; purifying, not enervating our desires, it lightens the mind, and rendering it free for action, increases that appetite for it which Providence has planted in our nature; it also precludes most of the misapplications of it, and thereby confines it very strongly into a tract suitable to the dignity of a moral agent: and here piety again interferes, and among other duties points out a new set of objects, in which some of the finest energies of the intellectual faculties will be gratified by being exercised in their most favourite occupations; whatsoever things are of good report, religion will point out to them as a proper scope of their pursuit; if there be any praise, we shall meditate on these things, that we may in all things adorn the gospel of Christ. But the good report and praise of society is generally very wisely bestowed; whatever tends to ameliorate its condition, receives the largest and most splendid share of it: and if they be thus governed by that Wisdom that is from above, every art and every science that does honour to a people, and renders it powerful and happy, would proceed in a much more rapid march toward farther perfection; our vallies and hills would stand so thick with corn, that they would laugh and sing; the feet of our cattle would be beside all waters; the bricks would fall down, and our houses be built of hewn stone; and instead of the sycamore, the beams thereof should be of the goodly cedar tree: that guiding Spirit that teacheth us to add to our faith knowledge, will lead on the human mind to the undiscovered tracts of nature, multiplying the provinces of science, and augmenting the utility of its dominion over those already acquired;

acquired; and whatever adds beauty to use, polished decorum to society, and grace to virtue, would become day by day more and more their own. These things adorn a state and increase the attachment of its members to it, by rendering them happier in it. These are the honours of the nations of the earth, and every man will feel his share of the public honour to be his own; hence the love of the land in which we first drew the breath of life receives a new accession of strength from them.

Let us take a view of the reverse of this: distress and depravity are two followers which generally dog intemperance and sensuality close at the heels; and when the bait is the relief of their necessities, and fresh materials for the indulgence of their criminal lusts, to be obtained in the hour of rapine and atrocity; when ~~society~~ society undergoes a violent change, they prepare the minds of men to the reception of any perverted principle; and the turpitude of that hypocrisy which pretends to delusion without being deluded, and to that frontless profligacy that dares the day, and scorns the slightest veil of pretence for evil;--- such men every bad cause attracts equally, and finds among them a band of ruffians ready to be enrolled in its service, whether it be that of tyranny trampling down the fences of justice and every salutary restraint upon power, or of those not less iniquitous men, who, in the language of St. Peter, "despise government;" "and while they promise others liberty, are themselves the servants of corruption," drawing the sword against equitable dominion, and sovereigns whom the laws of God and man command them to honour.

The day which subjects us to the vile captivities of sin and appetite, almost annihilates the nobler principle which constitutes us men: the temperate possess their minds undebilitated, with no strong attraction to bow them down to earth they walk erectly; and among such must be found, at least, the greater number of those who, just and tenacious of just purposes, cannot be biased or forced from the fair and straight line of public duty, by the frown and uplifted arm of oppressive power, or swept along in the torrent and rage of the multitude, precipitating themselves and every thing else into destruction.

Besides this restraint in the gratifications of sense, there are other propensities which religion puts under the same limitations; it requires us to be temperate in the pursuits of self-interest, of honour, in the exercise of just indignation, and in the whole detail of regulations laid upon us, forms a complete system of self-government; the noblest power man can exercise, to which it is one design of the gospel of Christ to raise all his true disciples, as nearly as the imperfect condition of humanity admits. And I shall conclude this discourse with considering the consequences to a nation, the individuals of which had acquired this great moral quality in no inferior degree.

The manners of such people will render them capable of being governed by a milder and more liberal system of laws; for the more strongly a man's inward principles restrain him from deviating from his duty, the less external coercion will he require to be made to continue in it; and the same principle may be extended to political societies: they are to be kept in the bounds of social duty

By the united restraints of self-government and national law, increase the power of the first, and the rigour of the second may be abated by the same quantity, and an adequate effect be produced by their joint operations; decrease it, and the weight of its supplement, or the coercion of law, must be increased in the same manner: this applies, indeed, only to general personal freedom; yet it has been the interest of sovereigns to foster this species of freedom, because they have found an immediate accession to their own authority; and for that purpose, it is a course which has been systematically pursued by many, even if we should not admit something like action and re-action between the exercise of sovereign power and the manners of a people, each considerably modifying the other.

The transition from personal to civil freedom seems almost necessary: the wise and the good will look forward to it as a second great end; every mind is drawn toward it by their authority, and by the analogy, or rather identity of the principles of each system; and the general opinion thus formed, and thus conducted, will lead such a nation on by sober steps, and succeeding each other at due intervals, to the attainment of a constitution where the seeming discordant elements of effective authority and public freedom shall be so blended and harmonised together, that the result shall be the happiness of the sovereign and the people; a termination of the natural progress of such a society, which nothing seems capable of preventing, but the busy rashness which shall attempt to hurry it on prematurely.

This conclusion is fortified likewise by that well-established truth, that the constitution of nature, as far as it respects moral agents, is moral, and on the side of virtue; and this is true as well of nations as of individuals. Now natural religion teaches us, that this constitution is established by the decree of God, as the ordinary system of his administration. Permanent national happiness is the natural reward of permanent national virtue; and without a well-constituted government, such happiness cannot take place.

These are the tendencies of self-government to improve our civil state; and where it takes place, it will lead a society forward without precipitancy or convulsion, to every improvement which, in its existing circumstances, it is mature to receive; and wherever a virtuous, deliberate wisdom, following that light, which, ascending, shineth more and more unto the perfect day, may progressively call it, "for where the spirit of the Lord is," there is dutiful obedience to those whom he hath set over us; and "there is liberty:"¹ for our Saviour himself hath promised us, that those who are "his disciples, indeed, shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free."

I shall dwell but little on the converse of this representation. To illustrate the connection of self-government and national liberty with more simplicity, it had been tacitly admitted, that the rigour of laws must increase with no greater celerity than the power of self-government decreases; which supposes,

¹ Where the individual possesses self-government, there will be an exterior regularity of manners; but the converse is not true: they may conceal avarice, fraud, malignity, all the vices of a cold dissocial temperament; he wants some of the highest functions of self-government.—To nations in which such characters are common, what is to be said will not apply?

² 2 Cor. c. iii. v. 17. John c. viii. v. 31, 32.

that the strength and stimulation of the passions are in both cases the same; or that they gain no additional force from the habit of unrestrained indulgence. But it is evident, that as the power of self-restraint diminishes, the passions grow up into a vitiated magnitude, and acquire a feverish and distemperate force; and to obtain a proper counterbalance for them, in this declining state of manners, the rigour of laws must be augmented more than the habit of self-government is decreased; and the necessary order of society will exact a system of laws so jealously rigid, and a spirit of administration so adapted to them, restrictions must be multiplied to guard so many points, which, in a wholesome state of public morals might be left open, that personal liberty, if not annihilated, will be greatly circumscribed; and when men have lost so estimable an end, for which the great machine of a free constitution is formed, they will grow indifferent about the balance and functions of its separate parts, and, indeed, about its existence. In vain may the skilful artist have raised a temple, which freedom might chuse to place her name therein, and deck the porches thereof and the courts of the inside of her house with perfect beauty, in the spirit of wisdom and understanding; in vain shall it boast itself, and say, my builders have perfected my beauty. Although the nations shall admire the excellency of thy splendor, and the ends of the whole earth shall long to tread the pavements of thy courts; if, as the generations pass away, thy beams become rottenness, and the worm preyeth upon them, the cement of thy walls become as untempered mortar, and thy marble as unbaked brick, thou shalt fall without a blast to shake thee, and thy ruin no man shall raise.

Thus I have considered the nature of that danger which calls for our present vigilance, and many of the evils which this day call for our repentance; and they are so widely extended, that they may be called national: the calamities they bring upon a nation I have shown historically, from a series of events so far connected with our religion, as to be a continuation of the scripture history of the people of God; and to exhibit a completion of a great prophecy of our Saviour, these calamities have been afterwards proved, upon general principles, to be the natural effects of those perverted maxims and manners of the Jews in that age, which are similar to those which have been of late spreading in this country, and not circumstances of that nation, which have a bare accidental connection by happening at the same period.

The conclusion to be drawn from the whole, is, that if with them, we follow where the same spirit of fanatical delusion would lead us, if we tread in the footsteps of their iniquities, the natural consequence of it must come upon us, sufferings similar to their punishment.

Let us, therefore, beseech Almighty God to work into our hearts that penitence for our past errors and iniquities, which may find acceptance with him; and that he will grant us the succour of his holy spirit to lead us, in this our day, in the way of those things which make for our peace; and that he will remove the mist from their eyes who cannot discern them.

We are also commanded to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us: let us, therefore, offer up our petitions to God in behalf of that deceived and guilty nation, whose crimes and calamities strike us with astonishment.—O, thou who fillest the heaven above and the earth beneath, and
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all the worlds that thou hast created, with thy goodness; who, in the deeps of that eternal darkness which was before they began, commandedst the light to be, and it was; who called on thy sun to come from his glorious chamber of the east, and he came forth; let the diviner beams of thy heavenly truth, to which this lower light is as darkness, pierce through that thick cloud with which a lying spirit has blinded their eyes, in closing them round with the night of the shadow of death; visit their souls again with thy day-spring from on high. Lord of all power and might, whose voice is heard by the whirlwind that shaketh the wilderness of Cadés, and the branch thereof moveth no more; who ruleth the storm, and the raging of the sea, and the waves thereof are laid asleep upon its glassy untroubled bosom; who sayest unto the angel who rideth in the red and fervid cloud of thy wrath, and scatters pestilence on the inhabitants of the earth, return thine arrows into the quiver, and he who had sickened unto death, drinks again in his strength of the freshness of the morning, breathed from the hills of Sharon; let thy mercy and thy power compose this tempest of the rage, the crimes, and the madness of the people into peace; strike their hearts, O Lord, with detestation for their past iniquities; remove from them all hardness of heart and despair of mercy, that they plunge no further in blood; and teach them, by such repentance and amendment that shall be least unequal to the atrocity of their guilt, to flee from the wrath to come. Grant this, O Lord, to the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who came into this world to establish peace and good-will among mankind, and suffered the death of the cross to redeem us from all our transgressions. Amen!

FINIS.

By the same Author,

POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

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ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

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INEQUALITY OF THE LAND TAX CONJOINTLY CONSIDERED.

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